New Self-Guided Tour Of Murals In County

With more than 50 murals completed and many more still in process, Santa Cruz County probably has more murals per square mile than any other West coast area, according to the County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The county's expanding community of artists and craftspeople has been joined by school children of all ages and even architects, to create a kaleidoscope of murals as varied as their creators.

Some make serious statements — two Greenpeace murals depict the vanishing leviathans, several are historic (from Aztecs to Ohlone Indians) and many are just for fun.

UCSC Associate Professor Eduardo Carillo believes that murals "contain information important to survival."

He explains: "My own cultural roots originally got me into murals and I feel that it's just as important to be a teacher as an artist. Murals are not just designs."

On the other side of the classical muralist debate is local artist Kent Karp who insists: "It's one thing to put a strong political thing on a building, but I feel it's even better to paint something beautiful that everyone can enjoy."

The two muralists also have painted several murals on the Lenz Arts building which for awhile, featured a new mural every month.

At Louden Nelson Community Center architect Jeff Oberdorfer used his mural as a mirror of the surrounding neighborhood.

Local people also were models for Henrietta Shore's now famous mural at the main Santa Cruz Post Office. Artist John Johnstone has created an Ohlone theme mural at Soquel Elementary School which was built on an Ohlone Indian burial site.

The Tortuga Patrol, a Watsonville -based group of artists, has adopted Mayan and Aztec history as its mural theme.

For more information about the self-guided murals tour, call 423-6927 or write the Convention and Visitors Bureau, P.O. Box 921, Santa Cruz, 95061.